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Classic Maya Women Rulers in Monumental Art

Keywords

Maya, hieroglyphics, women, monumental art, Classic Period, Palenque, Naranjo

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unusual in that a new type of ruler would come to power, an event which had never occurred before the Classic period nor would again after. What I am referring to is the ascent of three women to the throne, two as rulers of Palenque and one at Naranjo. Lady Kan-Ik, also known as Lady Ol Nal, Lady Kanal-Ikal (Hewitt 1999: 253) and Lady Yohl Ik'nal (Grube et al., 2000: 158), ruled in Palenque from AD 583 until her death in AD 604 (Grube et al., 2000: 159; Hewitt 1999: 254). Lady Zac-Kuk also ruled in Palenque from AD 612 to AD 615 and then remained in power as regent for another twenty-five years until her death in AD 640 (Hewitt 1999: 255). The last female ruler was Lady Six Sky who, native of Dos Pilas would hold power in Naranjo from AD 702 until AD 726 (Hewitt 1999: 255). Clearly, these women were able to gain an unprecedented amount of power, a fact I believe to be reflected in their portraits and associated hieroglyphs found on monumental art, which they commissioned or were erected in their honour. With this essay I will be comparing these Classic period Maya women rulers to contemporary male kings and other elite females in terms of their representation in hieroglyphs and on monumental art. From this comparison, I hope to explore what the differences and commonalities may tell us about how and why these women rulers were depicted in such an unusual "masculinized" way (Hewitt 1999: 251). To best answer this question I will address three topics; 1) a cursory comparison of the three groups of individuals in Mayan hieroglyphs; 2) an exploration of the similarities and differences of representation in monumental art; 3) an overview of the theories that have been put forth by scholars as to why Lady Kan-Ik, Lady Zac-Kuk and Lady Six Sky were portrayed in such unconventional ways as well as cover my own thoughts on the subject.

Women Rulers as Represented in Mayan Hieroglyphs

Mayan hieroglyphs appeared to be used for many purposes including elite propaganda. Specifically, in Maya inscriptions figures are referred to using their appellative phrases which are a series of personal names and titles that vary in length but which usually follow rules of context and syntax, which appear to be held in general across the Maya region (Hewitt 1999: 252). These name or appellative phrases of the Maya rulers and nobles invariably end with something known as the emblem glyph, which most scholars believe to be the place names of

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Amanda Hardman

The Maya Classic period was a time of fluorescence when cities, art and architecture flourished. However, for the ruling lineages of Palenque in Chiapas, Mexico and Naranjo in Guatemala it was an unusual time as well;

the center or geographic area they have dominion over or belong to (Mathews 1991: 22). Each emblem glyph consists of three signs; a prefix, a superfix and a main sign which is specific from site to site, but always the same within the site (Mathews 1991: 19). In general, the appellative phrases of male rulers consist of their personal name followed by an emblem glyph whose main sign identifies which city they are associates with (Hewitt 1999: 252). The prefix on the men's emblem glyph is always some variation of the "water group" symbol (Hewitt 1999: 253) and the superfix is the T168 sign which has been deciphered to "ahau", or "ajaw" which translated means "lord" or "ruler" (Mathews 1991: 23). It is also important to note that male rulers used these same hieroglyphs on their monumental stelae to mark a variety of important events in their lives including their own birth and accession to the throne as may be exemplified by King Pacal of Palenque on his Oval Tablet and King Smoking Squirrel on his commemorative Stela 22 at Naranjo.

Noble women also used appellative phrases to identify themselves when they appeared on public works of art, accompanied by emblem glyphs. However, their glyph combinations varied slightly from those of the ruling males. While noble women's appellative phrases began with their personal names as was seen with the men's, theirs were unique as they invariably started with a glyph known as the feminine head glyph "na" meaning "female" or "mother" (Hewitt 1999:252). In terms of appearance in other hieroglyphic contexts, women of elite status were most often mentioned in parentage statements on the stelae or other works of public art commemorating their offspring (Hewitt 1999: 251).

Of the three women rulers to be discussed Lady Kan'Ik is the least mentioned in the hieroglyphic inscriptions. She was named as ruler of Palenque on the East Tablet of the Temple of Inscriptions, a master list Palenque's rulers conscripted by King Pacal (Hewitt 1999: 253). She is only named in two other instances, both times accompanying her portrait on the east and west sides of Pacal's sarcophagus. In both cases her personal name is preceded by the female "na" prefix, typical of elite Maya women. Her emblem glyphs however, do not contain the "na" prefix, as would be expected, but instead, are prefixed by the "water group" variants that are standard on male ruler's emblem glyphs. (Hewitt 1999: 254; Green Robertson 1983b: 70). Furthermore, she has the superfix "ahau" or

"ajaw" the main emblem glyph sign for Palenque, designating her as a one time ruler of Palenque.

Palenque's second female ruler, Lady Zac-Kuk is mentioned more often than Lady Kan-Ik with a total of eleven appellative phrases (Hewitt 1999: 254). Four of these eleven appear on the Temple of Inscriptions, of which only one displays the female "na" prefix, while none of her concluding emblem glyphs do (Hewitt 1999: 254-255). Furthermore, of the three times Lady Zac-Kuk's appellative phrases occur on the lid of Pacal's sarcophagus, only one is shown with the female prefix (Hewitt 1999: 255). The last of Lady Zac-Kuk's appellative phrases occur in conjunction with her portraits on the north and south sides of Pacal's sarcophagus. Here, all of Lady Zac-Kuk's personal names are preceded by the female "na" prefix; however her emblem glyphs are headed by "water group" variants which are typical of male ruler's not elite women (Hewitt 1999:255). As with Lady Kan-Ik and the rest of the males figures depicted on the sarcophagus sides, Lady Zac-Kuk's emblem glyph has the "ahau", or "ajaw" ruler superfix designating her as another ruler of Palenque (Green Robertson 1983b: 67). However, unlike, Lady Kan-Ik, appellative phrases are not the only type of inscription in which Lady Zac-Kuk appears, nor does she only appear in parentage statements from which most elite Maya women gain their value as the mother of a significant child. After Lady Zac-Kuk's death, her son Pacal recorded her accession to the throne by commissioning hieroglyphic inscriptions similar to the one he had inscribed for himself (Figure 1). Specifically, the hieroglyphs record the accession of a woman named 'Lady Beastie' to the throne when Pacal was nine years old, which scholars have identified as Lady Zac-Kuk. Significantly, 'Lady Beastie' is also the name of the first mother goddess who was born before the present creation period and was mother of all other gods (Schele 1990: 227). Here, Lady Zac-Kuk is being elevated to divine status by her son, something that was not done for the average noble Maya woman, mother or Queen. The third and final woman to ever rule a Maya city is known as Lady Six Sky and presided over the center of Naranjo for over twenty years. Like the two women previously discussed, Lady Six Sky's portraits on monumental art can be identified by her appellative phrases. Like the majority of elite females mentioned in Mayan hieroglyphs, Lady Six Sky's personal names are preceded by the females head "na" prefix (Closs

1983: 67; Hewitt 1999: 255) while all eight of her emblem glyphs and her special title of bacab or "sky bearer", as noted on Stela 24 and 29 at the site are without the female head prefix. Hewitt notes that this variation is especially significant because the title of bacab was given to at least eight other Classic Maya women, all of whom had the female "na" prefix before it (Hewitt 1999: 255). However, Lady Six Sky's "bacab" sign was prefaced by the "ahau" or "ajaw" superfix typical of male rulers (Closs

1983: 67). There are further inscriptions on all of Lady Six-Sky's stelae, each of which portray her actions as very similar to those of Naranjo rulers before her. Take for instance the hieroglyphic inscription on Stela 31. In this inscription Lady Six Sky is described as presiding over the mid-katun celebrations, as ruler of Naranjo, much in the same way that King Chief Double-Comb had over 150 years before. Some scholars propose that this was done to legitimize her reign (Closs 1983: 72).

Figure 1: Pascal's mother (Lady Zac-Kuk) associated with the First Mother in her accession statement (Schele 1990:226)

Women Rulers as Represented in Maya Monumental Art

As with the hieroglyphic evidence, I will briefly outline the general aspects of the kings' portraits on monumental art, including aspects common across the Maya region as well as ones which appear to be specific to the rulers of Palenque and Naranjo. In general, male rulers of Naranjo and Palenque are usually portrayed with their bodies facing towards the viewer, and the head in profile (Hewitt 1999: 251). They can be portrayed either alone, often on a throne or atop of a bound captive (Joyce 2000: 68), or accompanied by others in which size and placement hierarchy are used to depict their high status (Hewitt 1999: 251).

The most common costume displayed by Maya kings was a short kilt with a beaded

belt, from which hung a jade maskette, three pendant celts and a loincloth displaying an image of a tree with jeweled branches and a deity's face on the trunk (Joyce 1996: 172; 2000: 43). Furthermore, male rulers, among other men, were often portrayed carrying lances, spears, shields and other weapons of war (Joyce 1993: 261; 2000: 68), along with the ceremonial bar, which at Naranjo was used to mark accession to the throne (Closs 1983: 68). Actually, at Naranjo there appears to have been three characteristic motifs of accession on monumental art, 1) the ceremonial bar; 2) a three boned crest at the top of the headdress and; 3) a headdress displaying a deity head with a long nose and lacking a lower jaw. Examples of each may be seen on the accession monuments of Naranjo rulers Smoking Squirrel and Chief Double Comb, among others (Closs 1983: 68). Lastly, while many Maya rulers' hair is covered by their

elaborate headdresses, the rulers of Palenque had a very specific hair style called the "Coronation Special ss.4" type (Green Robertson 1983b: 29). It consists of hair combed into one small ponytail at the front of the head, with more hair cut in varying lengths and gathered into a second high ponytail arrangement. There is a shaved part at the back of the head, at mid ear level with a small amount of hair below it reaching to the shoulders (Green Robertson 1983a: 67; 1983b: 29). Green Robertson explicitly expresses that this hairstyle was reserved only for men (Green Robertson 1983b: 29).

Turning the female portraits, it is important to note that it is generally assumed that portraits on Maya stelae and other public art only depict high status individuals (Bruhns 1988: 115; Hewitt 1999: 251). Therefore these portraits apply to the King's wives and other elite Maya women. These women are most often portrayed in conjunction with males (Hewitt 1999:251; Joyce 1996: 169; 2000: 74) and are often shown in profile. Moreover, they are usually depicted as smaller than the males they share the monumental portraits with, as well as on a lower level (Joyce 1996: 176). Hewitt and others noted that women are often shown passively accompanying religious ceremonies or witnessing a son's political triumph, which they feel indicated a women's value came from their role as mother to an important child (Grube et al., 2000: 333, Hewitt 1999: 251). In these scenes, women hold ceramic dishes containing paper or blood-letting tools and wrapped cloth bundles signifying their participation in rituals as well as their role as spinners and weavers (Joyce 1993: 261; 1996: 178).

There are three types of dress worn by elite women in Classic Maya monumental art, 1) simple garments covering the breasts but leaving the arms bare; 2) elaborately woven *huipiles* which covered the entire body; and 3) the lattice-work skirt and cape thought to be made of interlocking jade beads. Along with this final outfit a belt was worn, including a pendant depicting the head of a fish monster (*xoc*) above a bivalve shell (Bruhns 1988: 106; Joyce 1996: 170; 2000: 60). Lastly, on monumental art, Maya women traditionally wore their hair long

and tied in many different ways using ribbons and feathers (Bruhns 1988: 112).

Lady Kan-Ik's portrait only shows up twice in the Maya record; on the East and West sides of Pacal's death sarcophagus (Hewitt 1999: 254), where there are seven very important individuals portrayed along its sides, with Lay Kan Ik, Lady Zac-Kuk and her consort Kan-Bahlum-Mo (probably Pacal's father) each shown twice (Figure 2). Each individual is shown from the waist up with head in profile, in the process of sprouting from the earth in the form of fruit trees which has been interpreted as, "a metaphor for resurrection and the afterlife" (Grube et al., 2000: 160). Furthermore, Lady Kan-Ik and the rest of the rulers are shown with the "le" (leaf) motif emerging from the headdresses, which is the same motif worn by Pacal on his accession plaque (the oval tablet), and is thought to be a lineage sign (Green Robertson 1983b: 29). Lastly, while Lady Kan-Ik is shown to be on par with the other men on the sarcophagus, by her position and the ceremonial garb she is wearing, there are a few things about her which are unique and which identify her as female. For instance, unlike the other men depicted here, (except Lady Zac-Kuk's consort), she wears a cape under her pictorial medallion, probably to cover her breasts (Grube et al., 2000: 160; Hewitt 1999:254). Also, her hair is worn long with a pony-tail fixture in front, a common female hairstyle which is also shared by Lady Zac-Kuk in her depictions on the sarcophagus (Green Robertson 1983a: 67). Interestingly, she and Lady Zac-Kuk also share identical parallel-lined tattoos on their cheeks, the significance of which scholars have not yet determined (Green Robertson 1983a: 72), but which I think clearly mark them as separate in some way from the male rulers depicted on the sarcophagus.

The monuments of Palenque boast three portraits of Lady Zac-Kuk, two on the North and South sides of Pacal's sarcophagus and the other on the Oval Tablet, Pacal's accession plaque (Hewitt 1999: 254). Her portraits on the sides of the sarcophagus are nearly identical to those of

Figure 2: All sides of Pacal's sarcophagus. A and B are Lady Zac-Kuk on the north and south sides, while C and D are Lady Kan-Ik on the east and west sides (green Robertson 1983a:177)

Lady Kan-Ik; she is shown from the waist up, coming from the earth (Figure 2). Her head is in profile, both times facing her consort Kan-Bahlum-Mo with whom she shares the North and South sides (Hewitt 1999:254). She also wears the elaborate ceremonial garb and headdress complete with "le" (leaf) motif discussed above. While on par with the male rulers depicted on the sarcophagus she does share the same "female" characteristics as Lady Kan-Ik including the long un-shaven hairstyle, cape and parallel-lined cheek tattoo (Green Robertson 1983a: 72; Grube et al., 2000: 177). Her third and most elaborate portrait is on the Oval Tablet located in the Temple of Inscriptions (Figure 3, page 5). It is the accession plaque of Pacal the boy king who became ruler of Palenque at only twelve years of age in AD 615 (Green Robertson 1983b: 30). In the scene Lady Zac-Kuk is presenting Pacal with the drum major crown, in effect passing rulership from herself to him (Green Robertson 1983b: 30). She is the only woman ever depicted as bestowing the office of King to the next in line and therefore performing a very special ceremony (Green Robertson 1983b: 67). The crown is facing towards Lady Zac-Kuk, which scholars feel is appropriate as she is still queen and ruler at the moment and holding the power (Green Robertson 1983b: 30; Hewitt 1999: 254). One of the most interesting aspects of this portrait of Lady Zac-Kuk is her hair style. She is wearing the coronation style ss.4 hairstyle, a very unusual occurrence as it was reserved for men. Furthermore, Lady Zac-Kuk wears a headband made of long and small round beads like the one worn by Pacal (Green Robertson 1983b: 30). Unlike her other portraits, here Lady Zac-Kuk's body is shown fully in profile and is only slightly below that of her son (Grube et al., 2000: 161; Hewitt 1999: 255). Her dress is composed of the lattice-work skirt and cape, a common costume for women on monumental art and while her belt is very similar to that worn by her son, she has the xoc fish monster and bivalve shell pendant attached to it, again typical of elite female costume (Green Robertson 1983b: 30). It is interesting to note that the characteristics of Lady Zac-Kuk's portraits discussed above, are a

hybrid of elite male and female depictions, marking her as unique from both groups of Maya nobles, yet at the same time playing up her membership to both.

Lastly, Lady Six Sky is an interesting figure because unlike the portraits of Lady Kan-IK and Lady Zac-Kuk which were carved after their deaths, Lady Six Sky appeared to have been alive when hers were commissioned and at least partly in control of how she was depicted (Closs 1983: 71). There are four portraits of Lady Six Sky, all of which portray her in full frontal view as the central figure (Hewitt 1999: 255). On two of her stelae (24 and 29), she is pictured standing atop bound captives, in the manner of a warrior-king and is the only Maya woman to ever be depicted in this dominant position (Hewitt 1999:255). (Figure 4). On Stela 31, Lady Six Sky is portrayed with all three of the accession characteristic mentioned earlier in the paper including the ceremonial bar, three-boned crest and headdress based on a deity head with a long nose and no lower jaw. This makes some scholars argue this stela shows her accession to kingship in the same way Stela 22 showed Smoking Squirrel's and Stela 25 showed Chief Double Comb's (Figure 5). It has also been proposed that it indicates she ruled with the same complete authority as those who ruled in Naranjo before her (Closs 1983: 68, 72, Hewitt 1999: 255). The ceremonial bar is not the only thing Lady Six Sky is holding in her portraits; on Stela 24 while standing on a bound prisoner (like a warrior-king), she is holding a bowl of what appears to be ceremonial goods, which is typical of women shown in participation of ritual (Hewitt 1999: 255). Also in accordance with typical women's portraits in Maya monumental art, Lady Six Sky is wearing the lattice-work outfit complete with the xoc fish monster and bivalve belt front on both Stelae 24 and 31 (Figure 4). At Naranjo there seems to be no gender-specific hairstyle like there was at Palenque. Most images of Naranjo male rulers had such elaborate headdresses that their hair was completely covered, as was the case with Lady Six Sky.

Figure 3: Lady Zac-Kuk and her son Pacal on the Oval Tablet (Green Robertson 1983a:91)

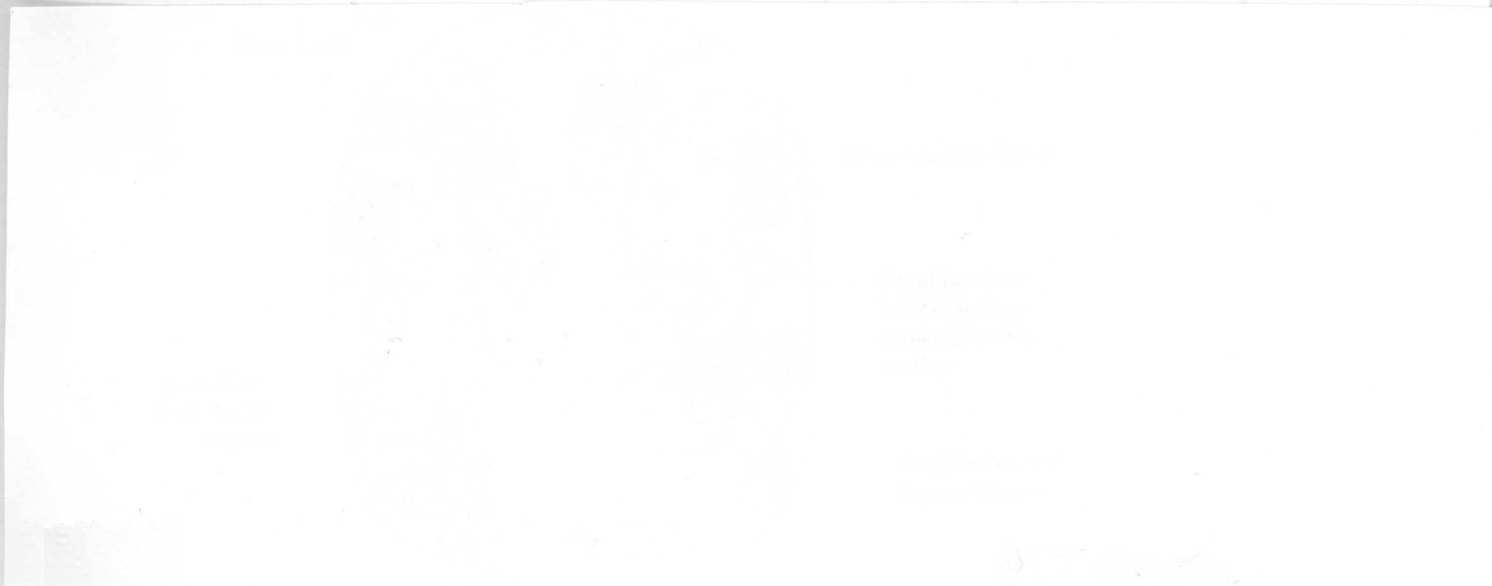


Figure 4: Top left (A) shows the association of Chief Double-Comb on Stela 25 (Closs 1983:70), while below him is the image of the Smoking Squirrel (B) doing the same thing (Closs 1983:68). Lady Six Sky is featured to their right (C) on Stela 31.

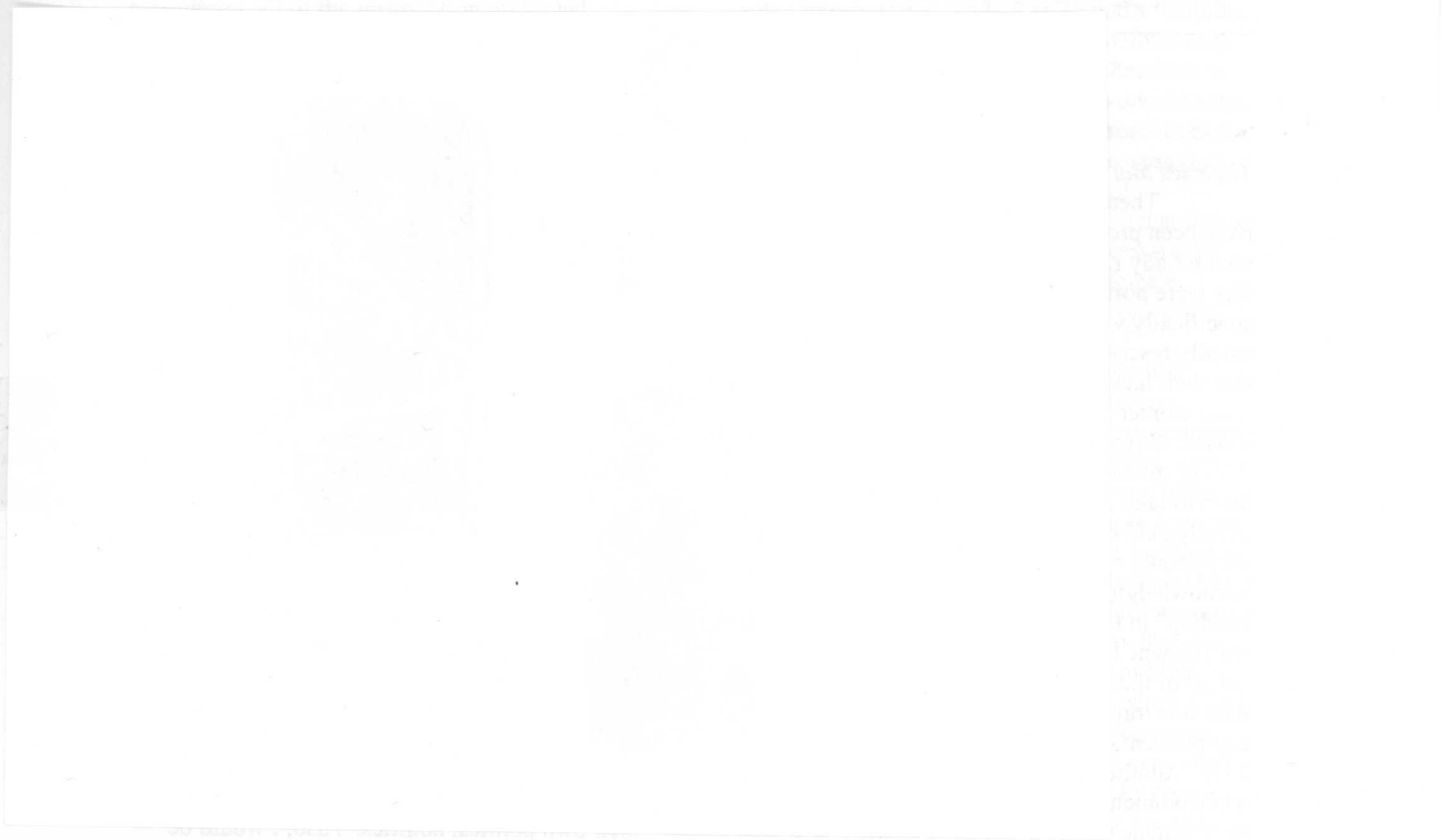


Figure 5: Left (A) is Lady Six Sky depicted standing on a bound captive in Stela 24 (Hewitt 1999:257). To her right is a man on Naranjo Stela 21 (B) depicted in the same dominating position (Joyce 1993:262).

Theories and Opinions

There are many interesting theories that have been proposed concerning the manner in which Lady Kan-Ik, Lady Zac-Kuk and Lady Six Sky were portrayed in art and hieroglyphs, specifically why they were portrayed in ways usually reserved for male rulers. Hewitt argued that their lack of female prefixes suggests that these women of unprecedented power in the Classic Maya period were "masculinized" (1999: 251) or given male characteristic which enabled them to take on positions of power which were usually held by men. This she contends, means they should not be considered as strictly female, acknowledging the possibility of "gender-bending" in Classic Maya notions of gender and sex (Hewitt 1999: 260). Finally she argues that "in all of these portraits of power masculine and feminine traits are balanced and thus complementary to each other" (Hewitt 1999: 251). Another scholar, Andrea Stone argues that when women of such high status gained by these three female rulers, adopt male costume and trait

they were, "impersonating a male image of power" (Hewitt 1999: 256). As an example she cites women wearing the lattice-work style of dress as there are various portraits of men on stelae wearing the same costume. In fact the xoc fish monster often depicted as part of this traditional "female" costume is actually most often found on male dancing figurines (Stone 1986: 201). She furthers her point by noting that women who wear this costume (like Lady Zac-Kuk and Lady Six Sky), are usually involved in a traditionally male activity and are always women of high status and importance (Stone 1986: 202).

While I agree with both Hewitt and Stone that all three of the Classic Maya women rulers discussed in this paper were portrayed using typically male traits and thus masculinized, I have my own thoughts about the subject. I am a little wary to believe that taking on male characteristics was the only thing that enabled these three women to gain their power and I feel there must have been other driving forces behind their ascent to the throne such as necessity and their own political abilities. Also, I would be

very interested to know what other's thought about Stone's assertion that the women wearing the lattice-work costume were impersonating male images of power, as no other author I consulted expressed this as a possible interpretation. It could be possible that the male figures in art who wore these costumes could be mimicking images of female participation in ritual. Moreover, I was a little disappointed that while both authors discussed how the women were masculinized, they only briefly mentioned why this practice was done, simply saying it was done to enable or legitimize the women's power by mimicking then man's, although I acknowledge that this type of information is difficult to get at in the archaeological record.

While it is true that Lady Six Sky portraits and hieroglyphs were masculinized to legitimize her ruler-ship, it would appear to me as though there is another very interesting reason why Lady Kan-Ik, and Lady Zac-Kuk were both depicted with a mixture of both male and female characteristics other than those provided above. As I mentioned before, Lady Kan-Ik and Lady Zac-Kuk's hieroglyphic inscriptions and portraits were erected long after their deaths by King Pacal, while Lady Six Sky's were done while she was still alive (Closs 1983: 71). After considering all of the information presented above, it would seem to me that Lady Kan-Ik and Lady Zac-Kuk were portrayed with both masculine and feminine traits largely to legitimize Pacal's rule and inheritance of kingship through a female line, not their own, as the theories of Hewitt and Stone originally lead me to believe. Lady Six Sky's portraits and mention of her in hieroglyphic inscriptions on the other hand, were "masculinized" to legitimize her own rule, not her sons or any one else's and so fit in better with Hewitt and Stone's ideas.

My thought that Lady Kan-Ik and Lady Zac-Kuk's portraits and inscriptions were masculinized by Pacal for his own ends is based by the fact that all mention of Lady Kan-Ik and Lady Zac-Kuk in public art was put there by Lady Zac-Kuk's son King Pacal. In an earlier paragraph I refer to the accession inscription Pacal had engraved about his mother, Lady Zac-Kuk, after her death in which he had her referred to as 'Lady Beastie' the name of a primordial goddess. I think that by elevating Lady Zac-Kuk to a divine position as "first mother" from whom he could claim descent, Pacal justified his divine rule as king, in effect drawing some of his value as King from his mother in what I feel is an

inversion of the normal roles played between elite Maya women and their important offspring, as it is usually the mother mentioned in parentage phrases which gains value from being the mother of an important child (Hewitt 1999: 251). Furthermore, it is my belief that he had the female prefixes excluded from both Lady Kan-Ik and Lady Zac-Kuk's emblem glyphs in effect to, as Hewitt and Stone said, "masculinize" (Hewitt 1999:251) them and equate them to other male Palenque rulers in the eyes of his subjects.

The same may have been the purpose of portraying both women in masculine positions on the side of Pacal's sarcophagus, for giving Lady Zac-Kuk the hairstyle reserved for men, as well as having her hold the crown, the source of all political power in the Oval Tablet. It was probably very important for Pacal to legitimize, both women to his people in their role as rulers because his inheritance of rulership from them came through their female line. This was not the norm in Maya society and could have been grounds to question Pacal's authority and right to the throne, especially if he could not convince the populace that both women were genuine rulers and therefore as their descendant, so was he. We must not forget however that both Lady Kan-Ik and Lady Zac-Kuk were portrayed with some female traits. Lady Kan-Ik had a feminine hairstyle and female head prefixes before some of her personal names, while Lady Zac-Kuk at times displayed the female lattice-work costume. I think that it was inescapable for these women to be portrayed with female traits because they were in fact female and no amount of masculinization could or would make that fact go away. Also, it would have been necessary for Pacal to depict Lady Zac-Kuk as a female because she was his mother and the one from whom he would receive the throne.

Lady Six Sky of Naranjo is a little different than the other two women rulers because she was still alive when her monuments were erected and therefore probably had some say in how she was portrayed. Because of this Lady Six Sky is shown participating in a greater number of masculine acts, including standing on bound captives and holding the ceremonial bar in what some take to be a depiction of her accession to the throne. Furthermore, Lady Six Sky also describes herself in the hieroglyphs of Stela 31 as presiding over mid-Katun rituals which Closs feels she did to portray herself as a legitimate ruler (Closs 1983: 72), a sentiment I very much agree with. In this way, Lady Six-Sky does a very effective job of "impersonating the male

image of power" to legitimize her status just as Stone feels all masculinized women do. Also, as with the two female rulers of Palenque, Lady Six Sky rarely had the female prefix on her emblem glyphs bringing herself closer to the male rulers who have governed Naranjo before her. However, in keeping with her "femininity", Lady Six Sky was portrayed with some female traits including what has become in my mind the highly disputed lattice-work costume as well as the female "na" prefix in front of her personal names. This shows again that her biological sex could not be erased from the history. Therefore these female characteristics were probably included to indicate that the figure being depicted was female and not another male ruler as many of her other artistic characteristics might incline one to believe.

To conclude, from the data and theories presented above, while each of the three women rulers retained female characteristics in art and inscription, they were also largely masculinized through the mimicking of male prefixes, costume and position. In the case of Lady Kan-Ik and Lady Zac-Kuk, I believe this was done to make them appear as legitimate rulers to those whom Pacal (not them) governed so that he could in turn justify his own position inherited through this female line, when tradition stated it should have been through a male lineage. Lady Six Sky was more active in her own portrayal to the general public of Naranjo, and interestingly she followed Pacal's practice of masculinization, taking it even further in her own portrayal most likely to legitimize her own rule, or to indicate to her subjects that she was to be viewed as ruler the same way previous rulers had been. It would have been very interesting to see how the portraits of Lady Kan-Ik and Lady Zac-Kuk would have differed had they been conscripted while the women were still alive and had some control over how they were portrayed like Lady Six Sky probably did. Unfortunately, at this time there is no direct way of investigating how the two women rulers of Palenque were viewed by or presented themselves to the general population of Palenque when they ruled, because no monuments were erected to them during their rule, or those which were have not been found or have long since been destroyed. Another interesting area of further research would be what sort of connection, if any, Palenque and Naranjo had that made them the only two Maya sites to ever have female rulers.

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